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This paper is a formal analysis of the Marble grave stele with afamilygroup relief sculpture. It is a pentelic marble style relief standing at 171. 1cm tall carved by a master. It is from the Late Classical period of Greek, Attic which was completed around ca. 360 B. C. . I chose to analyze this piece as apposed to the others because I’m mainly attracted to art and sculptures from the Greek era. The overall color used in this relief is ivory with a few cracks and pieces broken off. There is some discoloration which causes the color to come off as slightly light brown for most of the relief.

The sculpture appears larger compared to the other sculptures in the art room. It represents a family which includes a man, his wife, and their child united on one high relief. There is a fourth character that is a part of the relief but she appears to be incomplete. The high relief contributes to the overall size of this sculpture by expanding the shape and proportions of all the characters. The right side is compact consisting of three of the four characters while the left is loose with just a head present. The very first thing that my eyes are directed to is of the man sitting on a backless chair on the center-right side of the relief.

He along with his chair is positioned where his whole body is shifted and he facing the left side of the relief and looking straight ahead. His hands are the only ones that are detailed to the extent that they show the definition of the finger nails and the wrinkles and creases on the fingers and knuckle area. The left hand is placed on his lap while the right hand is slightly wrapped around and holding a stick that is to his right side and is eye-level in front of the woman standing behind him. The stick is about an inch wide and round and looks as though it could possibly be a wooden cane for support.

His body does somewhat look as though he is in shape although I can’t see any muscle definition partially due to the fact that his robe is blocking the front of his stomach. There also seems to be no body rolls and no body fat present. His attire is just a robe draped around his waist, over his lap and covering his legs all the way down to his feet. You can see that the excess material of the robe around his waist was intended for his whole body because of the multiple layers draped over his lap. There are no details of his toes or feet because of the missing piece of the relief but you’re able to see just the back of his foot.

His inch long hair and full facial beard look extremely wavy and curly. The fact that his facial hair is present and thick on his face makes me assume that he is possibly in his forties although many men back in that time didn’t live that long. He is sitting with ease and his face seems calm all the while staring blankly ahead. Looking at his face straight on, there seems to be no emotion in his eyes. My eyes are then shifted towards the woman on the right side of the relief. The woman seems to be his wife and is shown standing extremely close to him.

Since the chair is backless, I think her standing so close behind him depicts her unity with him. It seems as though she is his support and is there to follow him. She is right up against his back with her right hand up by her chest and his head. The wife and child’s attire displays a robe draped over the entire body leaving only her arms exposed although the wife has sleeves draping all the way down behind her forearm. The robe drapes over the wife’s head like a shawl or veil covering the back half of her head including her hair and ears.

Her facial expression gives off a sense of sadness even though she is staring blankly ahead in the same direction as the husband. Compared to the man, her eyes aren’t as widely open and it seems as if she is slightly squinting giving me the idea that she may be crying or is holding it in. Overall, you can tell that she has no other emotion displayed on her face besides sadness. After examining the wife, I work my way down to the awkward and odd looking child standing in front of the mother and is facing forward, opposite of the parents.

I’m not too sure whether the child is a male or female but based on the fact that she is basically fully clothed, I would say it’s a female. I describe the girl as awkward and odd looking because she is extremely tiny compared to her parents. Her mother’s hand is the same size as her head, maybe even slightly bigger. She looks like she can be the same size as a toddler but her body looks as though it’s close to being fully developed, almost like a shrunken lady. The girl is holding something in her left hand which looks like a small piece of paper.

She is holding her mothers left hand with her right hand and the mother’s hand looks as though she is gently and delicately holding hers. She is standing behind her father but is slightly closer to his left side while her right arm is leaning on the chair. She is wearing a similar robe as her mothers except she doesn’t have a veil and the sleeves end at her armpits exposing her shoulder and arms. The expression on her face shows no emotion and she is also staring blankly ahead. Because there is no emotion on her face and since she is only a child, I assume she is at that age where she’s not aware of what’s going on yet.

She doesn’t seem to comprehend the presence of sadness with along with the adults. The last person I look at is a woman on the upper left-hand corner of the relief. Her whole body is basically missing except for her head which remains fully intact. Her hair looks exactly the same as the wife’s hair but she doesn’t have a veil covering it. Looking at both the woman on the upper left corner and the wife on the right, both of their earlobes seem to have a perfect tiny hole in them which leads me to assume that they may have been pierced.

The only other body part of hers that appears on the relief is her left shoulder and her left forearm which looks like it is leaning against the man’s right arm. I’m not sure if her body is purposely missing because part of the relief had broken off over the years but it seems as though it signifies her as invisible or non-existent. Her eyes are clearly staring at the man sitting down with the sense of sadness and disappointment. She is looking straight at the man but he doesn’t seem to acknowledge her and is looking straight ahead along with his wife which also gives me a reason to think she’s invisible to them.

The bottom parts of the marble sculpture which is the base floor that the man is sitting on, and the wife and child are standing on is severely broken and cracked. The only detail on the bottom floor that I can see are three of the wife’s toes wearing a sandal and the child’s feet which look like she is wearing slippers because there are no sign of toes. You can also see the back of the man’s shoes. I don’t think he is wearing sandals because you can clearly see there is no flesh showing. The artist seems to use a lot of thick lines mainly defined on the clothing where you’re able to see multiple folds of the fabric.

They all seem to be standing close together as if they are discussing something and because of their sad expressions, they seem to be mourning a death or event that just happened. All their lips seem to curve down on the corners of their mouths with no sign of smiling or even a smirk. None of them are smiling and all four characters have either a melancholy blank stare or sad emotion. All of their eyes have creases but no sign of pupil color except for the slight shadows within the eye which helps to tell which direction their eyes are staring.

While staring and piecing the whole relief together, I assume that the woman on the left is actually their daughter since this is a family group sculpture. Going back to the through of her being invisible to the other three leads to my guess that she might possibly be dead. This would explain the overall sadness that is present at the moment. The parents are mourning the death of their daughter while her head present and body missing signifies that she is still there with them, just not physically.

Another little detail that I previously noticed was the daughter’s left forearm leaning against her father’s arm. This gives the effect that the daughter is trying to comfort her father while he is grieving. This work shows the natural emotion of humans and they are displayed as realistic. I think that the overall emotion and story behind this relief is done exquisitely by the master who carved it which is why it is said to be one of the most moving funerary reliefs from the Late Classical period.